

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The claims in this listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-31. (Cancelled)

32. (New) A market research system used in a market research network including a seller terminal, a market research system that receives a market research order from the seller terminal, and a plurality of consumer terminals each having a storage device that stores a personal profile with associating keywords and evaluation values for the keywords and reflecting consumer preferences, the evaluation values comprising, for each keyword, a positive score corresponding to a number of times consumers have indicated interest in merchandise information associated with the keyword and a negative score corresponding to a number of times consumers have indicated no interest in the merchandise information, the market research system comprising:

a search signal distributor that distributes a search signal to the seller terminal, the search signal including a keyword associated with merchandise information for merchandise subject to market research and a merchandise ID;

a reply signal processor that receives a reply signal from the consumer terminal, the reply signal including an evaluation value for the merchandise information, the evaluation value being determined based upon the positive score and the negative score in the personal profile corresponding to the keyword contained in the search signal; and

a market research controller that processes the evaluation values of the reply signals for the merchandise information from the consumer terminals, generates a marketing research report signal summarizing the evaluation values for the merchandise information from the consumer terminals and transmits a market research result to the seller terminal that is a source of the market research order.

33. (New) The market the research system according to claim 32, wherein:

the evaluation values are stored together with the personal profile, the personal profile corresponding to the keywords contained in the merchandise information distributed from a merchandise information server that distributes the merchandise information according to a request from the consumer terminal;

said merchandise information server being configured to distribute the merchandise information from a merchandise information storage in which the merchandise information presented by the seller terminal is stored; and.

said search signal distributor being configured to obtain the merchandise information regarding the merchandise subject to the market research from said merchandise information storage to generate the search signal.

34. (New) The market research system according to claim 32, wherein, when market research is requested by the seller terminal, an ability of the seller to pay for the research is confirmed.

35. (New) The market research system according to claim 32, wherein the search signal and the reply signal are encrypted before being transmitted.

36. (New) The market research system according to claim 32, wherein the market research network further includes a merchandise information distributor that

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stores the merchandise information received from the seller terminal, said market research system comprising:

a search signal generator that obtains merchandise information corresponding to the merchandise ID from the merchandise information storage device and generates the search signal; and

a merchandise information reliability surveyor that is configured to receive a consumer ID, the merchandise ID and a seller ID contained in a merchandise order, forward the consumer ID, the merchandise ID and the seller ID to the search signal generator, and to forward the reply signal that the market research controller has received in accordance with the merchandise ID and the seller ID, to the seller terminal identified by the seller ID; and

the search signal distributor being configured to distribute the search signal to the consumer terminal having a storage device that stores the personal profile of the consumer identified by the consumer ID.

37. (New) The market research system according to claim 36, wherein the merchandise information distributor further comprises an availability determiner that queries the consumer terminal as to whether the personal profile is available, and, when the personal profile is available, retrieves the personal profile from the storage device and provides the personal profile to the seller terminal that requests the personal profile.